

REMARKS

Claims 1, 3, 5-10, 23 and 24 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 1, 9 and 10 are amended and claims 23 and 24 are added. The amendments and added claims introduce no new matter. Reconsideration of the application based upon the above amendments and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

Applicants appreciate the courtesies shown to Applicants' representative by Examiner Wong during the January 18, 2008 personal and January 22, 2008 telephone interviews. Applicants' separate record of a summary of the substance of the interviews is contained in the following remarks.

The Office Action, on page 7, rejects claims 1, 3 and 5-10 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. Claims 1, 9 and 10 are amended to obviate this rejection. Withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

The Office Action, on page 6, rejects claims 1, 3 and 5-10 under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph, as allegedly failing to comply with the written description requirement. Specifically, the Office Action asserts that the feature of water solution substantially not including a ligand which complexes nickel, as recited in claims 1 and 9, lacks written description support in the specification allegedly because the specification does not provide literal support for this feature. Without conceding the propriety of this rejection, and solely to advance prosecution of this application, claims 1 and 9 are amended to obviate this rejection.

During the January 18 personal interview, the Applicants' representative presented the above amendments to the Examiner. The Examiner agreed that the formal rejections should be withdrawn.

The Office Action, on page 2, rejects claims 1-3 and 5-8 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over JP-A-2002-212775 to Oshima in view of U.S. Patent No. 3,183,067 to Du Rose et al. (hereinafter "Du Rose"). The Office Action, on page 5, rejects claims 9 and

10 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Oshima, in view of Du Rose and U.S. Patent No. 2,986,501 to Martin. These rejections are respectfully traversed.

The Office Action asserts that Oshima and Du Rose, in combination, would have rendered obvious the combinations of all of the features recited in claims 1 and 9. Without conceding the propriety of the rejections, claim 1 is amended to recite the first plating bath consisting of a nickel source, a conductive salt, a pH stabilizer, and optional additives and having a concentration of the nickel source of 0.3 mol/l to 0.7 mol/l on a nickel atom basis and a conductivity of 80 mS/cm or over, the nickel source selected from the group consisting of nickel sulfate, nickel chlorides and nickel bromides and the pH stabilizer selected from the group consisting of boric acid, sodium borate, potassium borate, lithium borate and magnesium borate. Claim 9 is amended to recite similar features.

None of the applied references, individually or in combination, teach, nor can they reasonably be considered to have suggested, this feature. During the January 22 telephone interview, the Applicants' representative presented the above amendments and argument to the Examiner. The Examiner indicated that further consideration of the applied references would be required.

As argued in the September 10, 2007 Amendment After Final Rejection, entered by the October 3, 2007 Request for Continued Examination, Oshima teaches an oxycarboxylic acid as the pH buffer. For at least this reason, it is unreasonable to assert that Oshima anticipates, or would have rendered obvious, the combination of all of the features recited in claims 1 and 9.

Du Rose and Martin are not applied in any manner by the Office Action to overcome the above-identified shortfalls in the application of Oshima to the subject matter of the pending claims.

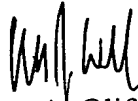
For at least the reasons discussed above, the applied references, individually or in combination, cannot reasonably be considered to teach, or to have suggested, the combinations of all of the features positively recited in independent claims 1 and 9. Additionally, claims 3, 5-8, 10, 23 and 24 are also neither taught, nor would they have been suggested, by the applied references for at least the respective dependence of these claims on an allowable base claim, as well as for the separately patentable subject matter that each of these claims recites.

Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections of claims 1, 3 and 5-10 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over the applied references are respectively requested.

In view of the foregoing, Applicant respectfully submits that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 1, 3, 5-10, 23 and 24 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicant's undersigned representative at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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